

Pesantren Culture in Building Generations and Nations

Puji Rahayu¹, Ahmad Baqi Ghrafiza²

¹Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Nahdlatul Ulama Kotabumi, Indonesia

²Universitas Al-Azhar Cairo, Mesir

Email: ¹puji.rahayuzati@gmail.com, ²abbaq2020@gmail.com

Abstrak

Pesantren culture is formed as a result of the dialectic between the faith that is believed and the cultural reality that develops in the Pesantren community. This is because the Pesantren community believes that the culture contains high moral values and is beneficial for life, maintaining harmony with society and the surrounding environment. Culture can be interpreted in 3 parts, namely intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, which leads to visible culture and invisible culture. Among the cultures of modern Pesantren is developing the values of aqidah, sharia, devotion, intellectualism, leadership, discipline, independence, simplicity, cooperation, responsibility, and mastery of foreign languages, both Arabic and English, in accordance with the demands of the times.

Keywords: *Pesantren* culture, generation, nation

Introduction

Pesantren is a model of Islamic education native to the archipelago. Pesantren has long been a place for the formation of ulama and national heroes. The values of the Pesantren have been maintained to this day. The future of modern Indonesian civilization must rely on a virtuous civilization whose level of excellence is expected to be able to compete with other world civilizations. Pesantren institutions, with their vision of always evolving to suit the times, are currently experiencing various fundamental changes that actually play an important role in the transformation process of modern Indonesian civilization.

In historical studies, the contribution of Pesantren as Islamic educational institutions cannot be separated from the map of the historical process of educational development in Indonesia as a whole, including the formation of generations. The fact that Pesantren is an important and inseparable part of building Indonesian civilization is a necessity. Starting from the Islamic Kingdom in Aceh and continuing in the Walisongo era until the early 20th century, many religious figures and ulama in all fields became an illustration of the contributions made by Pesantren. Traditional Islamic educational institutions have developed, especially in Java-Madura, for centuries (Hakim & Aksa, 2021, p. 198).

So it is not surprising that the Pesantren education system can always adapt to developments with the times. A *Santri* (student) has more value and a separate identity than students in general education institutions. The knowledge gained from kiai is developed in general education, namely affective or behavioral. From the start, Pesantren has instilled this in educating their students. In the Pesantren tradition, knowledge is charity. “Santri” is a Malay term used to refer to individuals who study under the guidance of a Kiai. More specifically, Santri is students who are undergoing an educational process in an pesantren environment and receive care from a kiai, who is often called a member of the pesantren Community. Another opinion states that the term santri actually comes from the Javanese language. The word "*cantrik*" denotes someone who always follows a teacher on his journey with the aim of obtaining learning in the field of science (Aksa & Hakim, 2023, p. 133).

The typology of Pesantren includes traditional, modern and a mix of moderate traditional Pesantren. First the traditional (*Salafiyah*) learning system, where learning uses a traditional approach. Learning is focused on studying classical Arabic books. Second is the modern (*Khalafiyah*) learning system. Organizing learning using a modern approach. Third, mixed pesantren that combine *Salafiyah* and *Khalafiyah* learning systems. These three systems both have a focus on learning a foreign language, namely Arabic (Azizi, 2004, p. 15).

Modern Pesantren system has educational programs that are prepared independently. These programs contain formal, non-formal, and informal educational processes that take place throughout the day in one condition in the dormitory. Pesantren is not only a place of learning but also a process of life itself, character formation, and resource development. The characteristic of modern Pesantren is that they prioritize education in the formal school system and are boarding schools that develop and use Arabic and English as the basis for their learning.

The culture of modern pesantren, which is thick with modernity, has become a concept of progress to develop the young generation in society, religion, and nation according to the developments of the times. Because one of the guidelines in education is to educate children according to the era in which they live. The alumni of modern pesantren in Indonesia are currently increasingly being taken into account. Modern pesantren education methods produce many superior people in society.

Including modern cottage alumni Dr. K.H. Idham Chalid (former deputy prime minister of the Republic of Indonesia). He was a national figure, a

religious figure, and a major figure in the Nahdlatul Ulama organization who influenced the New Order masses. Hidayat Nur Wahid. Who does not know Hidayat Nur Wahid? He is a Gontor alumnus of 1978 who is now deputy chairman of the MPR for the 2019-2024 period. And Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin is an alumnus of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor in 1983. He is the Minister of Religion replacing Suryadharma Ali. Previously, he was the deputy chair of the Indonesian MPR from 2009 to 2014.

This study is important to carry out to obtain a description and analysis of modern Pesantren culture, especially which is starting to develop now in accordance with the demands of the times so that readers get a complete picture of the existence and role of Pesantren as one of the milestones of Islamic-based education in Indonesia in order to build a generation and nation.

Result and Discussion

Culture comes from the Sanskrit language, namely "buddhayah," which is the plural form of buddhi (mind or reason), which is interpreted as things related to the human mind and reason. So, culture or culture is a system that is formed from behavior. Both body and mind behavior. Moreover, this is closely related to the movement of society, where dynamic movements over a certain period will produce a separate order or system within the community group (Siswanto & Yulita, 2019).

Culture is the legacy of actors who have very strong values in setting the values needed for the organization. Culture is a role model because culture is a lifestyle that encompasses everything. A culture is expressed in traditions, traditions that give its members a sense of belonging to a unique culture. Traditions are norms and procedures that must be adhered to together, and they must also adapt to developments in time, knowledge, and technology to create a global culture. Culture acts as a tool of social control through applicable norms and laws. That is how culture works because there are normative impositions in it that must be obeyed together in a community/organization (Marwiyah, 2022). Culture itself can be interpreted as changes in behavior because culture refers to the concept of norms, values, beliefs, or expressive symbols.

According to Koentjaraningrat (Zuhriy, 2011) Because culture is related to the human mind and reason, culture has at least 3 forms, including 1) The manifestation of culture as a complex of ideas, notions, values, regulatory norms, and so on. 2) The manifestation of culture as a complex of activities and

patterned behavior of humans in society. 3) The form of culture as objects created by humans.

Based on the understanding of culture, every individual, community, and society through their creations can create a certain culture when the creations created are then repeated, even then become a collective agreement, then when the creation has been transformed into a culture. One community that is able to form a distinctive culture is *Pesantren*, some of which are also called modern *Pesantren*.

Pesantren culture consists of a set of beliefs, behaviors, and habits that are part of a particular society. *Pesantren* culture is formed as a result of the dialectic between the faith that is believed and the cultural reality that develops in the *Pesantren* community. *Pesantren* customary practices are usually deeply rooted in the *Pesantren* community, recognized as true, and passed down from one generation to the next. This is because the *Pesantren* community believes that the culture contains high moral values and is beneficial for life, maintaining harmony with society and the surrounding environment. *Pesantren* has many distinctive characteristics, one of which is cultural. The habits in *Pesantren* there are:

- a. Santri always wakes up before dawn. This is usually done for evening worship (*tahajud*), *witir* prayers, reading the *Koran*, and memorizing books and lessons.
- b. Santri is accustomed to reading the *Koran* after prayer. Santri always reads the *Al-Qur'an* after *fardhu* and *sunnah* prayers, and reading the *Al-Qur'an* has become a daily habit for the *santri*.
- c. Read books, both religious literature, primarily Arabic and general language
- d. Obedience to Allah SWT, parents and *kyai*.
- e. Speak in everyday life using foreign languages such as Arabic or English.
- f. Santri is accustomed to memorizing in mastering subjects.

One of the educational institutions in Indonesia which has its characteristics and is different from other educational institutions is the *Pesantren*. This institution was born, grew, and developed a long time ago. In fact, since other educational institutions in Indonesia were not yet known, *Pesantren* appeared earlier. That is why *Pesantren* is seen as an authentic Indonesian educational institution (Fitriyah et al., 2018).

The difference between modern and traditional *Pesantren* lies in the learning curriculum. Traditional cottages use classic books such as the Yellow

Book as learning studies. Meanwhile, modern boarding houses not only study religion but there are also several general sciences. Then another difference is that modern huts adhere to the system, while traditional or *Salafiyah* huts adhere to the figure of the kyai (Malik, 2021). However, in essence, the goal of modern and traditional Pesantren is the same, namely to produce a generation that has good morals and is ready to be competitive and beneficial in the religious community and nation.

Modern Pesantren is Pesantren that try to fully integrate the classical and school systems into the boarding school. The study of classical books still exists but is no longer prominent, and some have only become supplements and turned into subjects (M, 2017). Pondok Modern Gontor first introduced the term modern Pesantren. The term Modern in Gontor's terms connotes positive modern values such as discipline, neatness, punctuality, and hard work. Including modern physical values which are reflected in the way Gontor students dress with military-style ties, jackets, and short hair.

This is a renewal effort carried out by Pesantren so that they can continue to exist in the era of modernization. Efforts to reform traditional Pesantren into modern Pesantren is carried out by improving relevant systems. Efforts to reform the education and teaching system in Pesantren, especially modern Pesantren, are characterized by the following things:

- a. Change the curriculum to suit community needs
- b. Improving the quality of teachers and infrastructure
- c. Make updates gradually
- d. Emphasis on conversational Arabic
- e. Use contemporary Arabic literature books (not classics books/*kitab kuning*) (Abdul Tolib, 2015).
- f. Have a formal school under the Pesantren curriculum.
- g. No longer using traditional recitation systems such as *sorogan* (M, 2017).
- h. Discipline and Order: Pesantren applies strict rules and regulations to create a structured learning environment. Santri is expected to follow these rules, including regarding time, clothing, behavior and worship.
- i. Fostering Independence: Pesantren also aim to form independence in their students. Santri is taught to manage their time, carry out their worship independently, manage themselves, and overcome the challenges of daily life.
- j. Religious and General Science Learning: Apart from religious education, Pesantren also provides general science lessons such as mathematics,

languages, social sciences and natural sciences. This aims to provide a comprehensive foundation of knowledge to students.

- k. The existence of a student organization that regulates the activities of the students, everything regarding the lives of the students is regulated and carried out by them themselves in a democratic, mutual cooperation manner, and with an atmosphere of brotherhood under the guidance and supervision of their caregivers and coaches (Malik, 2021).

Not all of the criteria above are met in a *Pesantren* that claims to be modern. Pondok Modern Gontor, the inventor of the term modern hut, for example, whose modern characteristics lie in the active use of contemporary Arabic (conversation) and a way of dressing that imitates the West. However, it does not have a formal school whose curriculum is recognized by the government. Modern *Pesantren*, thus, are the opposite of *Pesantren Salaf*.

The three main characteristics of *Pesantren* includes:

- a. All *Pesantren* always teach moderate Islamic teachings. Because the Islam developed in Indonesia through *Pesantren* is a moderate Islamic ideology. This is very important in the Indonesian context.
- b. *Pesantren* is not only the families of their leaders or *kyai* but also their students and alumni, who have a great spirit of diversity. *Pesantren* is very wise in teaching students not only to understand differences but also to respond to differences.
- c. *Pesantren* teaches love of the country. Only in areas, regions, and countries where Islamic law is peaceful can virtue values be implemented well. So, the obligation to protect and preserve the homeland is an inseparable part of every Muslim and is even a measure of the quality of a true Muslim's faith.

Modern *Pesantren* teaches Islamic religious knowledge and general sciences but still teaches classical books such as *Salafiyah* *Pesantren*. The leadership pattern of this *Pesantren* is usually collective-democratic, so there is no centralization of decisions in the figure of a *kiai*. The system used is classical, and the evaluation used has clear and modern standards (Zuhriy, 2011).

According to Barnawi (Malik, 2021), modern *pesantren* have experienced significant transformations in both their education system and institutional elements. This *Pesantren* has been managed with very neat management and administration, and the teaching system is implemented with equal portions of religious education and general education, as well as mastery of English and Arabic. Since the mid-1970s, *Pesantren* have developed and have formal

education, which is part of the Pesantren, starting from primary education, secondary education, and even higher education, and Pesantren have implemented management principles.

Along with the dynamics of the times, many Pesantren whose original education system was *Salaf* have completely changed to become modern Pesantren. The characteristic of modern Pesantren is the priority of education in the formal school system and the emphasis on modern Arabic (more specifically on speaking/*muhawarah*). Meanwhile, in developing (modern) Pesantren education, it has a responsibility as a school with Islamic characteristics to be able to improve the quality of human resources because quality humans have at least two competencies, namely IMTAQ and science and technology competencies.

Pesantren's teaching prioritizes intention because everything must begin with the intention to gain useful knowledge rather than pursuing material things. Pesantren aims to instill a sense of religion in all aspects of life as people who are useful for religion, society, and the nation. Moreover, develop citizens to have Muslim personalities in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion and instill a sense of religion in all aspects of life as people who are useful for religion, society, and the nation (Fitriyah et al., 2018).

Pesantren not only appear as the center of religious education that produces religious thinkers but also play a role in producing community leaders in the religious, social, and political fields (Rahmatika & Abimanyu, 2021). Achieving the teacher's blessing is one of the characteristics of the students. General education institutions have not absorbed the value of this blessing. The students are not only required to gain knowledge from the kiai but also to transfer knowledge. In fact, santri is not only cadres to behave well, but they are cadres to gain the blessing of knowledge itself. A student will make various efforts to obtain blessings from Allah through serving the teacher. The students have very high respect for the Kiai. Not only when we meet but also when we do not meet. Not only when you are still at the Pesantren, but that respect will always be carried over even if you have a career outside the Pesantren.

With the cottage system, students can concentrate on studying all day long. Living in a cottage or dormitory model is also very supportive for the formation of students' personalities, both in terms of how to socialize and socialize with fellow students. With the various potential roles played by Pesantren, Pesantren have a high level of integrity with the surrounding

community, as well as being a moral reference for the lives of the general public in the country (Putra, 2021).

The implications of forming students who have superior qualifications in knowledge are not only realized in the cognitive realm, but are also formed in everyday attitudes and actions. Starting from this idea, the *Pesantren*, which has its own authority in terms of forming its own culture, carries out the learning and teaching process in an integrative-comprehensive manner (Zuhriy, 2011).

Modern *Pesantren*, which include various activities with non-stop coaching, provide examples of cultivating good morals for students/*santri*, including a culture of queuing, discipline, honesty, simplicity, independence, mutual help/Islamic brotherhood, life skills and so on. *Pesantren* is the main alternative for society in implementing religious understanding, where one religion and another are not allowed to insult and criticize each other. In modern boarding schools, of course, ethics is taught. It's not just about the Islamic religion, but how to respect each other without having to look at ethnicity, race and religion. Religious understanding is very important to apply in everyday life, with this it will create and build harmony in society, religion and nation.

Pesantren culture consists of values, beliefs, customs and philosophies of life that are built and maintained by *kyai* as central figures and are supported by the system that applies in modern *Pesantren*. The forms of modern *Pesantren* culture include a culture of family, togetherness and helpfulness, quality, honesty and responsibility. This culture remains sustainable due to the existence of cultural glue including obedience, familiarity, honesty and responsibility of the students towards the *kyai* and the boarding school which is interpreted as an attitude of *tawadhu'*, worship and sincerity.

In *Pesantren* culture (Muhakamurrohman, 2014), Apart from being taught to recite the Koran and study religious knowledge, the students are also taught to practice and be responsible for what they have learned. *Pesantren* also teach the values of simplicity, independence, a spirit of cooperation, solidarity and sincerity. Simplicity indicates a resignation from the ties and hierarchies of local society, and a search for a deeper meaning of life contained in social relationships. The spirit of cooperation and solidarity ultimately embodies the desire to merge individuals into a pluralistic society whose goal is to sincerely pursue the essence of life. As for this concept, the meaning of good relations emerges not only between the students themselves, but also between the students and the *kyai* and with the community. From this spirit of sincerity,

Pesantren alumni become individuals who are emotionally intelligent, virtuous, and responsible for every mandate they carry out.

In modern pesantren, foreign language culture in the linguistic environment is defined as an environment that allows students to have the opportunity to develop Arabic as a communication tool. Modern Pesantren use Arabic as a second language because students use Arabic in various daily communication activities while in the boarding school environment, an environment that is deliberately created in such a way that students do not have the opportunity to use other languages as a means of communication. And almost all activities experienced by students both inside and outside the classroom are carried out in Arabic. And this is one of the characteristics of modern cottage culture and systems (Suparyanto dan Rosad (2015, 2020).

In organizing Arabic language learning, teachers at Pesantren adhere to the principles of functional and interactional language theory. Functional language theory prioritizes aspects of the communicative functions of language rather than the forms of language, while interactional theory focuses more on the use of language as a tool for creating and maintaining social relationships between members of society. Zamakhsyari Dhofie said (Kahar et al., 2019) An interesting aspect of the educational culture in modern pesantren schools is that between teachers and students there is a feeling of respect and obedience from their students. Students' feelings of respect and obedience towards teachers are unbroken and last a lifetime. Students' feelings of respect and obedience to teachers in all aspects of their lives constitute a strong inner bond.

In fact, the most important thing in modern pesantren is not the lessons, but the values taught and instilled in the souls of the students. It is these souls that will maintain the survival of the Pesantren and determine its philosophy of life. K.H Imam Zarkasyi formulated the spirit of Pesantren into 5 things called "Panca Souls" which include the spirit of sincerity, the spirit of simplicity, the spirit of independence, the spirit of Islamic *ukhrawah*, and the spirit of freedom.

The implementation of Panca Term at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor not only produces a positive impact in the education domain but also makes a real contribution to the social and economic development of the surrounding community. Pondok Gontor has succeeded in creating a holistic education model that produces quality graduates and empowers society at large. Pesantren Gontor can be a model for the best implementation (best practices) of modern pesantren management that adapts to changing times' dynamics (Syamsuri et al., 2023, p. 189).

Renewal of the education and teaching system in *Pesantren*, especially modern *Pesantren*, includes the following 1) Change the curriculum to suit community needs. 2) Improving the quality of teachers and infrastructure. 3) Make updates gradually. 4) *Kyai*/teacher should as owners of *Pesantren* be open to positive renewal efforts. In this way, the culture of modern *Pesantren*, which contains values embodied in habits, will encourage the formation of Islamic behavior in daily life for students who are ready to be competitive in society, religion and nation.

Conclusion

Pesantren is a continuation of the *Salafiyah* *Pesantren* education system, whose emergence aims to adapt to the demands of the current era. Combining traditional and modern systems. One of the characteristics of modern cottages is that the language used is mostly Arabic and English in an effort to answer the challenges of the times they are living through. On the other hand, the leadership system in modern *Pesantren* does not only rely on *kyai* but shifts from charismatic to rationalistic, from authoritarian paternalistic to participative diplomatic. Culture can be interpreted in 3 parts, namely intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development, which leads to visible culture and invisible culture. Among the cultures of modern *Pesantren* is developing the values of *aqidah*, *sharia*, devotion, intellectualism, leadership, discipline, independence, simplicity, cooperation, responsibility, and mastery of foreign languages, both Arabic and English, in accordance with the demands of the times.

Bibliography

- Abdul Tolib. (2015). Pendidikan Di Pondok *Pesantren* Modern. *Risalah Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 1(1), 60–66.
- Aksa, A. H., & Hakim, M. L. (2023). Santri in the Frame of Religious Harmony. *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial*, 4(2), 131–142.
- Azizi, Q. A. (2004). Profil Pondok *Pesantren* Mu'adalah. In *Departemen Agama RI*. Departemen Agama RI.
- Fitriyah, W., Wahid, A. H., & Muali, C. (2018). Eksistensi *Pesantren* dalam Pembentukan Kepribadian Santri. *Palapa*, 6(2), 155–173. <https://doi.org/10.36088/palapa.v6i2.73>
- Hakim, M. L., & Aksa, A. H. (2021). Axiological Study Towards the Law Number 18 / 2019 about *Pesantren*. *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial*, 2(2), 197–212.

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.35878/santri.v2i2.329>

- Kahar, S., Barus, M. I., & Wijaya, C. (2019). Peran Pesantren dalam Membentuk Karakter Santri. *Anthropos: Jurnal Antropologi Sosial Dan Budaya (Journal of Social and Cultural Anthropology)*, 4(2), 170. <https://doi.org/10.24114/antro.v4i2.11949>
- M, F. (2017). Pondok Pesantren Dan Ciri Khas Perkembangannya. *TARBAWI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(1), 12–20. <https://doi.org/10.26618/jtw.v1i1.348>
- Malik, R. K. (2021). Pesantren Modern dan Tradisional Cermin Komunikasi Pembangunan. *Al-Munzir*, 14(2), 191–210.
- Marwiyah, S. (2022). Pengembangan Budaya Pesantren Berbasis Kearifan Lokal di Pondok Pesantren Putri Salafiyah Bangil dan Pondok Pesantren Ali Ba'alawi Kencong Jember. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan ...*, 631–652. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v11i01.2324>
- Muhakamurrohman, A. (2014). Pesantren: Santri, Kiai dan Tradisi. *Ibda' Jurnal Kebudayaan Islam*, 12(2).
- Putra, D. W. (2021). Pesantren Dan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat (Analisis Terhadap Undang-Undang Nomor 18 Tahun 2019). *PROCEEDING IAIN Batusangkar*, 71–80.
- Rahmatika, A. N., & Abimanyu, B. (2021). Peran Pondok Pesantren dalam Pemberdayaan Sosial Ekonomi. *At-Tauzi: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam*, 22(2), 1–12.
- Siswanto, I., & Yulita, E. (2019). EKSISTENSI PESANTREN DENGAN BUDAYA PATRONASE (Hubungan Kiai Dan Santri). *MITRA ASH-SHIBYAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 2(1), 87–107. <https://doi.org/10.46963/mash.v2i1.27>
- Suparyanto dan Rosad (2015. (2020). PERAN PONDOK PESANTREN MODERN DALAM MENGEMBANGKAN BAHASA ARAB Bambang. *Suparyanto Dan Rosad (2015, 5(3), 248–253*. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v10i01.2899>
- Syamsuri, S., Labolo, S. N. S. D., & Firdaus, I. M. (2023). Implementation of Panca Jangka as a Strategy to Develop the Pesantren Gontor. *Santri: Journal of Pesantren and Fiqh Sosial*, 4(2), 177–194.
- Zuhriy, M. S. (2011). Budaya Pesantren Dan Pendidikan Karakter Pada Pondok Pesantren Salaf. *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, 19(2), 287. <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.2011.19.2.159>
- Taufiqurrohman, M. (2015). The Road to ISIS: How Indonesian Jihadists Travel

to Iraq and Syria. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 7(4), 17–25.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351346>